



# ***MassWildlife News***

*Commonwealth of Massachusetts – Division of Fisheries and Wildlife*  
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## ***IMPORTANT REMINDER FOR SHOTGUN DEER SEASON HUNTERS***

All deer harvested during shotgun season **MUST** be checked at a traditional check station. Online checking will **NOT** be available during this time (December 2 – 14, 2013). Reporting deer at check stations during these 2 weeks allows biologists to collect valuable data needed for deer management. [Click here to find a checkstation.](#)

## ***2014 LICENSES GO ON SALE DECEMBER 2***

Beginning Monday, December 2nd, the 2014 hunting, sporting, fishing, and trapping licenses will be available for purchase at all license vendor locations, [MassWildlife District offices](#), the West Boylston [Field Headquarters](#), and on the internet at [MassFishHunt.org](http://MassFishHunt.org). Anyone 15 or older needs a license in order to fish in freshwater or to hunt. It is possible to purchase either a 2013 or a 2014 license in December; therefore, license buyers are reminded to be sure to select the correct year when buying a license. Minors 15-17 years of age may not purchase hunting or sporting licenses online, and must have certain documentation in their possession when making their license purchase at a MassWildlife District office or other license vendor location. Freshwater fishing licenses for minors ages 15-17 years of age are free and can be obtained online.

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## ***JOIN THE 114TH CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT***

Make the Christmas Bird Count part of your seasonal outdoor tradition! From December 14, 2013 through January 5, 2014, bird lovers in Massachusetts will be participating in the nation's longest running wildlife survey, the 114th Annual Christmas Bird Count (CBC). Families, students, birders, and scientists armed with binoculars, bird guides, and checklists embark on this seasonal mission - often leaving before dawn. The data collected by bird observers over the past century allow researchers, conservation biologists, and other interested individuals to study the long-term health and status of bird populations across North America. When combined with other surveys such as the Breeding Bird Survey, the CBC provides a picture of how the continent's bird populations have changed in time and space over the past hundred and fourteen years.

In Massachusetts, there are 33 geographic "count circles" where bird counts occur. Each count circle is coordinated by an experienced Count Compiler who works with teams of birders who have signed up for that circle's bird count. Beginning birders can join a group that includes at least one or two experienced birdwatchers in charge of covering a portion of the circle. In addition, if your home is within the boundaries of a count circle, you can help by reporting the birds that visit your feeder. In either case, if you have never been on a CBC before, contact your local Count Compiler to find out how you can participate. For more information, visit the [MassBird website](#). More information and history about the CBC can be found at [National Audubon's web page](#).

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## ***2013 DEER HUNT FOR PARAPLEGIC HUNTERS A SUCCESS***

This year the deer hunt for paraplegic sportsmen and sportswomen was held October 31 - November 2, 2013 at five sites statewide. Twenty-nine hunters participated, taking six deer (2 button bucks, 2 does, and 2 bucks). This translates to a 21% success rate for the hunt. Many hunters saw deer, contributing to a successful hunt experience. "Being able to provide opportunities for paraplegic hunters is very gratifying and I have enjoyed overseeing the hunt for the last 13 years," said MassWildlife Biologist Trina Moruzzi, Hunt Coordinator. She noted that volunteers are integral to the program and thanked them for their enthusiasm and commitment. Next year's hunt will be held October 30 - November 1, 2014. If you are a paraplegic sportsman or sportswoman interested in participating in the 2014 hunt, contact Trina Moruzzi at <mailto:trina.moruzzi@state.ma.us> or call (508) 389-6318 for more details.

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## ***GIVE A GIFT ON THE WILD SIDE!***

Now is the time to consider a wildlife-related gift for the outdoor or wildlife enthusiast on your holiday list! The following suggestions from the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife (DFW) are suitable gifts to consider for all ages. You can find these gifts ideas and more at [Mass.gov/masswildlife](http://Mass.gov/masswildlife).

A 2-year subscription to [Massachusetts Wildlife magazine](#) (\$10) delivers eight full-color issues of the Commonwealth's best wildlife publication. The magazine is packed with award-winning articles and photos on the environment, conservation, fishing, hunting, natural history and just about everything relating to the outdoors in Massachusetts. For the budding conservationist, try a copy of the *Critters of Massachusetts* book (\$5). “Critters” is a great gift for the curious youngster or the beginning adult naturalist with an interest in backyard wildlife and beyond. For the more advanced naturalist, the *Field Guide to Dragonflies and Damselflies* (\$20) or *A Field Guide to the Animals of Vernal Pools* (\$12) might be just the ticket. Both of these guides contain in-depth descriptions and detailed photographs help the reader identify and learn more about these creatures. For the budding herpetologist, there are a couple of options: *The Field Guide to the Reptiles of Massachusetts* features information on breeding, feeding habits, range, habitat, and conservation issues. This special edition of the Massachusetts Wildlife Magazine (\$3) offers spectacular color photos, including color and pattern morphs of those species with variations, and a list of key features that allows you to identify any native snake or turtle (except sea turtles) found in the Commonwealth. The turtle enthusiast in your life may also enjoy the *Introduction to the Threatened Turtles of Massachusetts* (\$5), a video available from the DFW's Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program. Visit the [DFW publications page](#) for more information and order forms. More publications can be found at the [Natural Heritage and Endangered Species publication page](#). Call the West Boylston Field Headquarters at (508) 389-6300 if you need further assistance.

The sportsman or sportswoman in your life will appreciate a 2014 hunting, fishing, or sporting (combination) license and any supplemental stamps they will need. Remember that freshwater fishing licenses for minors ages 15-17 years of age are free! (Minors under 15 do not need a license to fish.) Beginning December 2, 2013, licenses for 2014 will be available for sale online or through license vendors throughout the state. License purchases support MassWildlife's fish and wildlife conservation, management, and habitat protection programs in Massachusetts. Go to [MassFishHunt.org](#) to make a purchase.

Give them the gift of the outdoors! Purchase a gift certificate for one of the 2014 [Becoming an Outdoors-Woman workshops](#). Workshops on skills such as animal tracking, shooting, fishing, kayaking, and photography are designed for adults and families new to that particular skill. The 2014 schedule of workshops will be posted in January. Contact Sue Fritze at (508) 389-6300 or via email at [sue.fritze@state.ma.us](mailto:sue.fritze@state.ma.us) for more information.

A terrific outdoor experience for teen girls and boys is the [Junior Conservation Camp](#), a two-week overnight camp session packed with outdoor skills learning such as shooting, fishing, canoeing, camping, and field trips with biologists. The camp is located in Chesterfield and will be held in August.

For the person who has everything, make a donation in his or her name to support one of the following funds. Money from the [Wildlands Fund](#) is dedicated to acquiring and conserving important wildlife habitat open to wildlife-related recreation. Send the honoree's name with a check made out to “Comm. of MA - Wildlands Fund” and send it to our Boston office: DFW, 251 Causeway St, Suite 400, Boston, MA 02114-2152. The [Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Fund](#) supports efforts to protect rare and endangered wildlife. A donation in the form of a check made out to “Comm. of MA - NHESP” can also be sent to the Boston office.

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## ***YOUTH OUTDOOR WRITING CONTEST ANNOUNCED***

The New England Outdoor Writers Association (NEOWA) is sponsoring a Youth Outdoor Writing Contest for school students in grades 6-12 across New England. Students are invited to submit a writing entry pertaining to any outdoor activity by February 15, 2014. The contest is a perfect opportunity for teachers and parents to connect with young people about the wonders and benefits of spending time outdoors. There are two student categories: the Junior Division includes grades 6-8, and the Senior Division includes grades 9-12. Entries must pertain to an outdoor-oriented topic and can include: hunting, fishing, boating, archery, shooting, field trials, sporting dogs, camping, woodcraft, diving, hiking, rock climbing, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, wildlife watching, natural history, conservation, ecology, and similar activities. The written work should not exceed 500 words. Massachusetts student entries must be submitted in digital format via email to, Mike Roche ([mikeroche3@msn.com](mailto:mikeroche3@msn.com)), the NEOWA Massachusetts chairperson. NEOWA reserves the right to publish any work submitted. However, students also retain publishing rights. Division winners will receive \$125, and the two New England-wide winners will receive an additional \$150, bringing their award to \$275 each. For more information, visit the NEOWA Website <http://www.neowa.org/youthwritingcontest.html> or contact Marion Larson at [marion.larson@state.ma.us](mailto:marion.larson@state.ma.us) or call (508) 389-6311.

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## ***UPCOMING PUBLIC MEETINGS***

The Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EOEEA) will hold 2 public hearings to allow interested parties to provide comments on the 2015 fiscal year budget.

**December 2 – Greenfield** – This meeting will take place from 5:30 P.M. to 7:00 P.M. in the first floor meeting room of the Franklin Regional Council of Governments, John W. Olver Transit Center, 12 Olive Street, Greenfield.

**December 3 – Boston** – This meeting will take place from 2:30 P.M. to 4:00 P.M. in the Basement Atrium at Department of Conservation and Recreation Headquarters, 251 Causeway Street, Boston.

Written comment is encouraged prior to the hearing. Interested parties may also submit written comments at the hearing or through the close of business on December 13, 2013. Please address them to: Richard K. Sullivan, Jr., Secretary, EOEEA, 100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900, Boston, MA 02114

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